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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0747  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 7522  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 4569  
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0472  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 4904  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: MORALES PRAISES OBAMA, BLASTS DEA

REF: LA PAZ 596

¶1. (SBU) Bolivian President Evo Morales gave a press conference with foreign press April 21 to express his views on the Summit of the Americas (SOA) in terms of the U.S.-Bolivian bilateral relationship. He highlighted his brief encounters with President Obama at the SOA, saying that Bolivia "saw an important signal from Obama" at the SOA, referring to Presidents Obama's statement opposing "violent overthrows of democratically elected governments." Morales stated that he now "considers it possible to restore relations if this declaration turns into real facts." Despite the generally positive review for Obama, Morales once again accused the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) of "covert political operations," arguing that "without DEA, we are better off."

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1.5 THUMBS UP FOR OBAMA  
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¶2. (SBU) President Obama apparently made a strong personal impression on Morales. Morales said he was most impressed by the President's "capacity to listen to all of the other countries in the region, whatever their political orientation." In comparison, Morales accused President Bush of "arriving for the international meetings, giving his speech, and leaving without listening to any other leader." Due to the "important start" at the SOA, Morales announced that he instructed the Foreign Ministry to convoke bilateral meetings to improve relations. Morales hoped to create a long term "just" trade deal that would be a "solution to the problems faced by Bolivian exporters to the U.S." in the wake of the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA).

¶3. (SBU) Morales differed with Obama's proposition to "turn the page" and "look to the future," instead emphasizing that "reviewing the past is important to fix mistakes and plan the future." He advised SOA participant countries to "compensate" for the damages done by 500 years of colonization.

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BEATING THE DEAD DEA HORSE  
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14. (SBU) Morales said he wants a "shared responsibility" in the counternarcotics battle, but that he would not accept any form of return for DEA. Morales expelled DEA from Bolivia in November 2008. Morales maintained that DEA was performing "covert political operations" and accused DEA of knowing about a large cocaine lab that Bolivian police discovered in March 2009. He claimed DEA had to know about the lab because the lab has been in existence for at least a year and a half. Despite wanting a relationship with the U.S. on counternarcotics, Morales underscored the \$20M set aside by his government for the fight and promised more support from Brazil and the European Union.  
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